



## **Multi-National Corps – Iraq**

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### **Pilots provide security, firepower from above**

Multi-National Division – North PAO

Story and photos by Spc. John Crosby, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq - When Soldiers conduct ground operations in Mosul's urban environment, they face many dangers. Small arms fire, indirect fire and roadside bombs are a constant threat to dismounted Soldiers and vehicles alike.

While up-armored vehicles and crew served weapons provide protection to these Soldiers, an additional asset, the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter gives the Coalition forces' and Iraqi Security Forces' ground troops an additional sense of security.

"Mosul is one of the last stopping points for the insurgency in Iraq," said Capt. Brian Carr the flight operations officer for 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Lewis, Wash. "It's very vital that we get this city safe and back into Iraqi control."

The Kiowa is a single engine, four-bladed, armed reconnaissance helicopter used in the role of a scout attack bird in support of ground operations. The Soldiers of 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav. Regt., maintain and fly these agile helicopters in Mosul and throughout Ninewah province, providing security, extra fire power and confidence to the "boots on ground" troops.

"The ground guys love us because we make noise over their head and scare the enemy off," said Chief Warrant Officer George Siegler, a Kiowa pilot in 4th Sqdrn., 6th

Air Cav. “On some occasions we get to find the bad guys and kill them, which of course the ground guys love as well.”

Since deploying to Iraq in June 2007, the 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav., “Redcatcher” pilots have flown more than 29,000 hours over their approximately 18,600 square mile area of operations.

“Our unit support is outstanding,” said Chief Warrant Officer Jack Varble, a pilot in 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav. Regt. “These guys will do anything and everything to make sure we have all of the information we need to complete our mission in the air.”

More than 2.5 million gallons of fuel have been pumped from three Redcatcher Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARP) in Ninewah Province to keep these birds of prey soaring. Soldiers working the FARPs are trained and ready to rearm and refuel a Kiowa in minutes, enabling pilots to return to the fight quickly.

“The guys on the FARP work as fast and safe as possible,” said Varble. “They get us back up into the air as fast as possible to complete our mission. Without them we couldn’t complete our mission.”

“They’re real fast. Sometimes we’ll call ahead and let them know there are birds inbound and we need fuel or armament fast,” said Siegler. “They always accommodate us. They’re great.”

As with any aircraft, several hours of maintenance are required for every flight hour in the Kiowa.

“We determine whether or not the birds are operational,” said Spc. Mario Aguilar, a Kiowa crew chief in 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav. Regt. “Occasionally they will see birds come in with battle damage. We’ve been hit with mortars and rockets here, damaging

our birds. We work as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to make the bird operational again.”

Ten months into their 15-month deployment, Soldiers of E Troop have completed more than 300,000 maintenance tasks amounting to more than 280,000 man-hours of work.

Something as small as a leak can cost somebody their life, said Aguilar. It’s very important to be thorough because peoples’ lives depend on it.

The Redcatchers take their mission seriously and know they have a big responsibility. The ground Soldiers depend on the pilots who depend on their support to keep them in the fight.

“The most rewarding part is to know that somebody’s Soldier, somebody’s husband, wife, boyfriend or girlfriend comes home because we were able to provide some aerial support,” said Carr. “Whether it be with covering fire or our presence intimidating the enemy into not coming out and harming our Soldiers.”



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An OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter fires 17 pound rocket over the city of Mosul, Iraq, April 6. The rocket was fired into a test fire pit, ensuring the bird's weapons systems are functional before moving out into the Mosul area to provide security for ground troops. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. John Crosby, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



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Chief Warrant Officer Tom Boise flies his OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter over Mosul, Iraq, April 6. Boise, a pilot with 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment from Fort Lewis, Wash., provides security and an eye from the sky for ground troops conducting operations in the Mosul and Ninewah Province.



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UH-60 Black Hawk pilots stand by as their bird is refueled at the Forward Arming and Refueling Point on the Logistical Supply Area Diamondback airfield in Mosul, Iraq, April 5. The FARP is run by Soldiers of the Fuel Distribution Platoon, G Troop, 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment from Fort Lewis, Wash. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. John Crosby, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



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OH-58 Kiowa Helicopter Pilot Chief Warrant Officer Tom Boise waits in the cockpit of his bird as Sgt. William Grigsby of E Troop, 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment from Fort Lewis, Wash., reloads the Kiowa with a 17-pound rocket at the Forward Arming and Refueling Point in Logistical Supply Area Diamondback. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. John Crosby, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)





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Sgt. Joshua Sullivan a OH-58 Kiowa helicopter crew chief of 1st Platoon, H Troop, 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment from Fort Lewis, Wash., performs a maintenance check on a Kiowa at Logistical Support Area Diamondback, Iraq, April 6. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. John Crosby, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



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Sgt. William Grigsby of E Troop, 4th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment from Fort Lewis, Wash., tests the rotors of an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter at Logistical Support Area Diamondback, Iraq, April 7. In this particular test, the blades are removed to measure the rotations per minute of the rotor. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. John Crosby, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – NORTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE AT: [MNDNPAO@1AD.ARMY.MIL](mailto:MNDNPAO@1AD.ARMY.MIL) OR DSN 318-849-0212.